
Testimony on HJR N (Stamas) & M (Knezek)
Before The House Military and Veterans Affairs Committee

September 18, 2013

The Presidents Council is pleased to report that all 15 Michigan public universities now offer in-state tuition for all veterans. The University of Michigan's Board of Regents approved the policy change effective January 2014, and Michigan Technological University is amending their in-state tuition policy at their Board meeting next week. We are now 15 for 15. We believe in-state tuition for veterans is the right policy and the problem has been solved. Mission accomplished, as they say.

I would also like to point out that a signed letter from all 15 presidents and chancellors, dated March of 2008, our state universities again took unified action to make in-state tuition available for all active military members and their the dependents. Institutions grant in-state tuition to active duty members of the armed forces of the United States and their spouses and dependents if a member of the armed forces is a resident of Michigan or is stationed in Michigan. We are committed to continue to work to identify and eliminate other education obstacles faced by military families.

And that is not all. In order to better support our student veteran military service members and their families, the public universities and community colleges have joined together and established a Consortium of Michigan Veteran Educators. The purpose of the Consortium between our public two year and four year institutions is to create a statewide network to improve the support and services for our active military and veterans' population. The primary goal of the Consortium is to increase the number of service members and their families who take advantage of the educational benefits that are available to them, such as the GI Bill. The Consortium members are also focused on ensuring veterans that enroll in our postsecondary intuitions receive the support they need to successfully complete a credential that will lead to gainful employment and productive lives. A secondary goal of the consortium is to serve as a convener of college and university staff to provide for professional development opportunities in sharing of best practices to better support the student veteran population.

The Consortium is also a member of the Multi-state Collaborative for Veterans (IL, IN, KY, MI, MN, MO, OH) that are collaborating to help service members/Veterans with their education including transcripts, credits, and degrees.

*Central Michigan University
Eastern Michigan University
Ferris State University
Grand Valley State University
Lake Superior State University
Michigan State University
Michigan Technological University
Northern Michigan University*


**THE MICHIGAN FIFTEEN
PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES**
Gateways to Opportunity

*Oakland University
Saginaw Valley State University
The University of Michigan – Ann Arbor
The University of Michigan – Dearborn
The University of Michigan – Flint
Wayne State University
Western Michigan University*

We are working closely with the State of Michigan Veterans Agency; in fact, we have its strategy person on our CMVE steering committee. Just last week, the State held a webinar on their Veterans Emergency Fund and there were over 80 participants.

We want to assure you that we are making strides but we are not the only institutions where a veteran can use his/her education benefits. There are 578 education benefits sites approved and available to Michigan veterans. 578. These are institutions of higher learning, non-diploma certification programs, apprentice programs, high school completion programs, flight school programs and many others.

There are many challenges facing our veteran population from compensation and pension to medical care to employment opportunities. As you know, Michigan has an aging veterans' population. Michigan veterans ages 50 to 70 comprise over half of the total veteran population, and Michigan's unemployment rate for veterans was almost 30% based on data that is roughly a couple of years old.

Our universities are committed to doing its part in adopting the right policies and will continue to work to identify and eliminate other obstacles faced by our veterans and their families.

I thank you very much.